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ABSTRACT

This guide offers suggestions on conducting literature reviews on topics relating to children and youth with disabilities. The guide recommends that the researcher begin by accessing a computerized database at a university, public, or private library. It specifically describes the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database and the ECER (Exceptional Child Educational Resources) database. Other ways of accessing ERIC, such as through an ERIC clearinghouse or via a home, office, or school computer, are noted; and names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the 17 ERIC Clearinghouses are listed. Methods of accessing ECER are then discussed. (JDD)

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# NICHCY

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## CONDUCTING A LITERATURE REVIEW: TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

Thank you for requesting information from the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). As you know, NICHCY provides information and technical assistance to parents, professionals, advocates, caregivers, and others related to the education of children and youth with disabilities. Each year, NICHCY responds to over 50,000 requests for information and technical assistance.

NICHCY maintains a resource collection and database that is utilized to develop publications, fact sheets, and to answer specific inquiries. Unfortunately, our Information Specialists are not able to do in-depth literature reviews, research bibliographies, and thesis/dissertation abstracts for students, journalists, or professional researchers. This effort, while worthwhile, is far beyond the financial and labor capacities of this project. We are able to provide you with some general information and tips to assist you in the development of your research. The enclosed information should assist you in locating the references you need.

We would suggest that you begin at a university, public or private library that can give you access to computerized databases. In most cases, you can enlist the assistance of the Reference Librarian to complete a thorough bibliographic search on your topic. In many instances, there are computerized databases available for searching. Additionally, the library may have the article(s) you are seeking. There are two excellent databases in existence which are useful when seeking information resources (articles, conference proceedings, research reports, etc.) in Special Education. You may search the **Educational Resources Information Center** (ERIC) database for research and literary articles available within the ERIC Clearinghouse system. There are a number of ERIC Clearinghouses, each devoted to compiling information in a specific area. (For information on disabilities, for example, you can contact the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children.) These Clearinghouses are listed at the end of this paper. Additionally, you may search the **Exceptional Child Educational Resources** (ECER) database for information related to children and youth with special needs. This resource is also described at the end of this paper.

These databases, and many more, can be accessed through commercial database vendors, such as BRS Information Technologies, Inc. BRS is available at most U.S. universities and many local public libraries. For additional information, you may wish to contact BRS at: **BRS Information Technologies, Inc.**, 8000 Westpark Drive, McLean, VA 22102. Telephone: 1-800-289-4277.

We hope that this information is useful in assisting you with your search. We regret that we can not feasibly provide all of the parents, professionals, and students who write to NICHCY with all the possible references pertinent to their research topic. If you are located within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, or are planning a visit in the future, we invite you to visit our offices where you may have direct access to our reference collection. If you would like to arrange a visit, please call our offices.

Once again, thank you for your interest in NICHCY. We wish you success in your studies and research.

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### What is ERIC?

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) is a federally funded information system with a database of over 40,000 journal annotations and 300,000 education related document abstracts. It is a source of publications about all aspects of education.

### How Can You Access ERIC?

#### -Through the Clearinghouses

One way to use the ERIC system is to contact the ERIC Clearinghouse that covers your topic. (See the list of clearinghouses that follows). The Clearinghouse response may be: pamphlets or flyers, bibliographies of selected publications, suggestions for database searching, or referral to other sources of information.

#### -Through a Local Library

A university, professional, or public library near your home probably has access to the ERIC database. The librarian can help you find the information you need by using the ERIC reference publications or by doing a computerized search of the database. Many university libraries also have the ERIC database on CD-ROM. These subscription disks can sometimes be accessed directly by users. At universities, user performed ROM searches can often be completed without charge.

#### -Through a Home, Office, or School Computer

Using a computer equipped with a modem, anyone can access the ERIC database from any location in the country. ERIC is available online through major database vendors such as DIALOG (1-800-3DIALOG) and BRS (1-800-289-4277).

### ERIC Clearinghouses

**ACCESS ERIC**
Aspen Systems Corporation
1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3166
(301) 251-5486; (800) USE-ERIC

**Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (CE)**
Ohio State University
Center on Education and Training for Employment
1900 Kenney Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090
(614) 292-4353; 1-800-848-4815

**Counseling and Personnel Services (CG)**
University of Michigan
School of Education, Room 2108
610 East University Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259
(313) 764-9492

EC 301909

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## ERIC Clearinghouses (continued)

**Educational Management (EA)**
University of Oregon
1787 Agate Street
Eugene, OR 97403-5207
(503) 686-5043

**Elementary and Early Childhood Education (PS)**
University of Illinois
College of Education
805 West Pennsylvania Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801-4897
(217) 333-1386

**Handicapped and Gifted Children (EC)**
Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091-1589
(703) 620-3660

**Higher Education (HE)**
George Washington University
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 630
Washington, D.C. 20036-1183
(202) 296-2597

**Information Resources (IR)**
Syracuse University
School of Information Studies
Huntington Hall, Room 030
Syracuse, NY 13244-2340
(315) 443-3640

**Junior Colleges (JC)**
University of California at Los Angeles
Mathematical Sciences Building, Room 8118
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1564
(213) 825-3931

**Languages and Linguistics (FL)**
Center for Applied Linguistics
118 22nd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-0037
(202) 429-9551

**Reading and Communication Skills (CS)**
Indiana University
Smith Research Center
2805 East 10th Street, Suite 150
Bloomington, IN 47405-2373
(812) 855-5847

**Rural Education and Small Schools (RC)**
Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc.
1031 Quarrier Street
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-1348
(800) 624-9120 (Out WV); (800) 344-6646 (In WV)

**Science, Mathematic and Environmental Education (SE)**
Ohio State University
1200 Chambers Road, Room 310
Columbus, OH 43212-1792
(614) 292-6717

**Social Studies/Social Science Education (SO)**
Indiana University
Social Studies Development Center
2805 East Tenth Street, Suite 120
Bloomington, IN 47405-2373

**Teacher Education (SP)**
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 610
Washington, D.C. 20036-2412
(202) 293-2450

**Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation (TM)**
American Institutes for Research
Washington Research Center
3333 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-2412
(202) 342-5060

**Urban Education (UD)**
Teachers College, Columbia University
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
Main Hall, Room 300, Box 40
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027-9998
(212) 678-3433

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### What Is ECER?

ECER (Exceptional Child Education Resources) is a database privately developed by the Council for Exceptional Children., The database contains citations and abstracts of print and nonprint materials dealing with the education and development of people of all ages who have disabilities and those who are gifted. Resources in all areas of special education and related services (including services provided by audiologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, physical therapists, and educational psychologists) are also covered in ECER.

Some overlap exists between the ECER and ERIC databases. This overlap applies primarily to unpublished documents (curriculum and teaching guides, reports, etc.) and to articles in core special education journals. The ECER records that do *not* appear in ERIC include published books, additional journal articles, and nonprint materials. Therefore, to conduct a comprehensive search of resources in special education, it is a good idea to search both ERIC and ECER.

### How Can You Access ECER?

Using a computer equipped with a modem, anyone can access the ECER database from any location in the country. The ECER database is available online through major database vendors such as BRS Information Technologies, Inc., (1-800-289-4277) and DIALOG (1-800-3DIALOG). The database is designed to use ERIC descriptors (drawn from the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors*), and searching is done in much the same way as within the ERIC system.

You can also contact the Council for Exceptional Children and ask for the Department of Information Services. For a fee, a search of the database can be conducted to meet your specific needs. Information specialists can also give you advice as to how to conduct a search of your own. This advice is free of charge.

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**For more information contact NICHCY.**